

From an article on "The Management of Placenta Previa, with a Report of Seven Cases" by A. B. Spaulding, M.D., San Francisco.

Placenta previa is not such a rare obstetrical complication, but any physician in general practice of medicine may at any hour be suddenly and most unexpectedly called upon to manage this dramatic obstetrical crisis.

From a report on "California Pure Food Commission" by George H. Kress, M.D., Secretary, Los Angeles, Cal.

The Los Angeles members of the State Pure Food Commission, under guidance of the health officer of Los Angeles, Dr. L. M. Powers, who is also the chairman of the Pure Food Committee of the Los Angeles County Medical Association, recently made two dairy inspection tours, each trip covering about seventy-five miles of territory. . . .

. . . The Pure Food Commission hopes to be able to present, some time soon, plans of dairy structures that will be both hygienic and economical in construction. . . .

The Commission spent a number of evenings in joint session with Dr. L. M. Powers, health officer of Los Angeles, who desired to have Los Angeles adopt an ordinance that would minimize the smoke nuisance. An ordinance was finally drawn up and presented to the Council, and will come up for first consideration on July 13. Its fate is hard to foretell, for the large gas and other corporations will be pitted against it.

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

By GILES S. PORTER, M. D.

Director

Scarlet Fever More Prevalent.—In many communities of California more cases of scarlet fever are being reported than have been reported during the past two years. Health officers who publish monthly mimeographed bulletins have commented on the increased prevalence of the disease in their respective communities. The disease is generally of a mild type, but occasionally a severe form of the disease is encountered. Even with mild cases the after effects may be serious, if not disastrous. It is highly important that adequate care be given to each case and it is of equal importance that all cases of the disease be discovered and placed under control in order that the spread of the disease may be checked. The mere fact that the disease is of a mild form often hinders progress in the control of scarlet fever.

Rat Flea May Spread Typhus Fever.—Several months ago the announcement was made by the United States Public Health Service that endemic typhus fever, which has been recognized for several years in the United States, had been shown to be transmitted by fleas.

Additional studies indicate that the rat flea is the agent that transmits this condition. This work has been proven by laboratory experiments and by field studies, all of which have been conducted by the Public Health Service. There seems to be ample evidence that endemic typhus fever is spread from rat to rat by the rat flea, and from rat to man by the same agency.

Food Faddists.—Probably the most fertile field of quackery today is that pertaining to diet. Self-styled "doctors" and "professors" would have you believe that white bread is poison; that fasting will cure all human ills; that to eat proteins and carbohydrates at the same meal is to court nutritional disaster, and

similar fantastic theories. The general public is so profoundly ignorant of even the elementary facts of the science of nutrition that the food faddist with a theory and the food quack with a scheme make profitable appeals to such ignorance. Most of the advocates of freak dietary systems are shysters, but there may be some fanatics in the field who believe in their own magic. To those whose knowledge of the chemistry of food is limited to the elementary superficialities of the secondary schools, the food faddists can talk glibly of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, mineral salts and, most wonderful of all, vitamins—and his claims, preposterous but plausible, are given serious consideration. As a result, we have a veritable plague of "diet experts" who dispense vast quantities of platitudes, piffle, and pernicious misinformation on the subject of nutrition. . . .

Danger in Home Canning of Vegetables.—The present economic depression may be responsible for stimulating activity among housewives in the home canning of surplus vegetables from home gardens. The California Department of Public Health issues a warning to home canners relative to the danger to health that lies in improper sterilization of such vegetables.

The chief danger lies in the possible contraction of botulism, a highly fatal disease which may occur through eating improperly packed food products. Powerful toxins or poisons may develop in home-canned vegetables, which are not heated sufficiently nor for a long enough period of time. It is almost impossible to secure adequate heat penetration without the use of a pressure cooker. Since pressure cookers are not always available because of their cost, it has been suggested that several families, or a community, purchase such equipment for the use of groups of individuals. One pressure cooker might be made to serve fifteen or twenty families.

More cases of botulism have occurred through the use of home-canned string beans than any other product. Cases have occurred, however, through the consumption of home-canned spinach, peas, corn, asparagus, and other vegetables. The cold pack method of home canning should never be used under any circumstances. This method was advocated during the war, but because of the unfavorable results that followed the use of this method it is recommended that it be discarded entirely. If the pressure cooker is not available, the vegetables may be dehydrated. A dependable publication on the subject, "The Home Evaporator," can be obtained from the Department of Agriculture and Home Economics of the State College of Agriculture, University of California, Berkeley. This publication gives directions for building and using the evaporator for preparing fresh vegetables and fruits and for caring for them after drying. The cost of building this equipment is negligible and it is far safer to use this method of preservation than to use any home canning process except the steam pressure cooker.

At this season of the year, when home canning is starting, this warning should be heeded. Failure to accept this warning may result in needless suffering and possible death.

Jimson Weed Poisoning.—An unusual outbreak of food poisoning occurred in San Joaquin County on June 14 of this year. Fourteen out of twenty-one farm laborers employed on a ranch about three miles from Stockton were taken suddenly ill about thirty minutes after eating dinner at the ranch house. Due to weakness in the legs they collapsed immediately. There was dryness of the throat, thickness of the tongue, dizziness, blindness, dilated pupils, rapid pulse, delirium, incoherent muttering, picking at the bed clothes, and retention of urine. There was no temperature, nausea, vomiting, nor diarrhea.

At first the symptoms seemed to be those of botulism, but an intensive investigation undertaken by Dr. J. J. Sippy, health officer of San Joaquin County,

and the State Department of Public Health, revealed the fact that Jimson weed had accidentally been cooked together with spinach, which had been served to the ranch workers. This weed was growing wild in the garden with the spinach and in gathering the vegetable both had been included in the "greens" which the laborers consumed. The pronounced symptoms which occurred were due to the powerful alkaloids that are found in Jimson weed, chiefly stramonium and atropin. It is understood that cattle will not eat Jimson weed. This outbreak was purely accidental in that the weed which contains these potent alkaloids was accidentally cooked with spinach. . . .

Conference on a Plan for Maternity Care.—In cooperation with the summer session of the University of California at Berkeley, the Bureau of Child Hygiene of the California Department of Public Health will hold a conference on a plan for maternity care at the University of California, Berkeley, July 19-21, inclusive. Sessions will be held in the auditorium of the Life Sciences Building, room 2003. Exhibits in maternal care will be held in room 3570 of the Life Sciences Building. Sessions will be held each afternoon beginning at two o'clock. There will be no morning sessions.

BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

By CHARLES B. PINKHAM, M. D.
Secretary-Treasurer

News Items, August, 1932

At a regular meeting of the Board of Medical Examiners, held at Native Sons Hall, San Francisco, July 11 to 14, the following actions were taken by the board:

Charles Bee Alexander, M. D., Alhambra, license revoked July 12, 1932, based on conviction of violation of Washington state banking laws.

John Theodore Kergan, M. D., Oakland, license revoked July 13, 1932, based on narcotic dereliction.

Robert H. MacLauchlan, M. D., San Francisco, license revoked July 14, 1932, for violation of probation.

Theodore H. Niemann, M. D., Los Angeles, license revoked July 14, 1932, for narcotic dereliction.

Carlos Hidalgo y Teran, license revoked July 14, 1932, based on narcotic dereliction.

The following were placed on probation after hearings based upon record of conviction or plea of guilty in federal court in connection with the Veterans' Bureau claims:

Isaac Alexander, M. D., five years' probation.
Reo B. Armitstead, M. D., one year's probation.
William E. Glaeser, M. D., one year's probation.
Edward Purcell, M. D., one year's probation.
Fred H. van Tassell, M. D., five years' probation.
John R. Vasko, M. D., three years' probation.

Probation was also granted the following:

Filiberto A. Bonaventura, M. D., narcotic violation, probation of three years, without narcotic privileges.
Maurice J. Pullman, chiroprapist, three years' probation.

The following cases were continued to the October meeting:

Francis M. Collier, M. D., narcotic violation.
Eliphalet T. Pattee, M. D., alleged illegal operation.
Eugene Rinaldo, M. D.
Aubrey Staples, M. D., Veterans Bureau Fraud.
Coyle John Tracy, M. D.
Simon R. Zachariah, M. D.

Cases against the following were dismissed:

Samuel Pink Burre, M. D.
Burpee Cooper, M. D.
Silvius S. Craig, M. D.
Charles L. McVey, M. D.

"Charged with violation of the State Medical Practice Act for giving fake cancer treatments at \$18 a treatment, Raymond di Silvo, thirty-nine, was arrested by Chief of Police J. M. Black yesterday morning and lodged in the city jail, pending filing of formal charges. . . . One woman stated that in an effort to impress her with his skill, the 'specialist' told her he had successfully treated a prominent San Francisco physician and received his check for \$2,500. . . . Under questioning yesterday, di Silvo is said to have admitted to police to treating numerous persons for cancer. . . ." (San Jose *Mercury-Herald*, June 30, 1932). According to the Bureau of Identification of the San Jose Police Department, this man's correct name is Raymondo de Silva, a native of Porto Rico, whose occupation is given as a butcher.

"Dr. R. A. Cushman, veteran Santa Ana physician, director of the California Medical Society and formerly chairman of the Orange County Republican Central Committee, today was appointed medical superintendent of the Mendocino State Hospital at Talmadge, near Ukiah. . . ." (Orange *News*, June 23, 1932).

"For violation of the Federal Narcotic Laws, Dr. Charles M. Stewart, 609 South Grand Avenue, yesterday was sentenced to two years in Leavenworth Federal Prison. The defendant had pleaded guilty. Assistant United States Attorney Balter showed to the court a grip containing cartridges, burglar tools and various kinds of weapons, all said to have been found in possession of the defendant" (Los Angeles *Times*, June 23, 1932).

"A man who gave the name of H. O. Walraven is being sought by police today on the belief he has swindled Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley physicians in an 'insurance racket scheme.' The hunt started following a complaint from Dr. Charles Burnham, Jr., 2287 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, that he gave the man a \$14 check when he represented himself as a salesman for a Los Angeles company delegated to select medical examiners. The man told Doctor Burnham that Dr. Donald Lum of Alameda had become an examiner under similar circumstances. Doctor Burnham called Doctor Lum and learned, he said, that Walraven was an imposter" (Alameda *Times-Star*, June 25, 1932).

"On a court showing that Dr. F. H. van Tassell, Oakland physician, convicted in the 'Veterans' Compensation racket,' is a very sick man, Federal Judge Harold Louderback, in San Francisco, permitted him to pay a fine instead of finishing the jail sentence. Van Tassell started serving a sentence of twelve months in the Alameda County jail on March 26. A similar sentence was given Dr. A. H. Staples, Oakland physician, at the same time. Doctor van Tassell paid the fine and was liberated today. . . ." (Oakland *Tribune*, July 11, 1932).

Reports relate that Harry Kramer, asserted promoter of the "Metropolitan Health Bureau" and the "National Farm Health Bureau" was on May 28, 1932, charged with violation of the Medical Practice Act. Information relates, further, that at a recent hearing held before Federal Judge Louderback the "Metropolitan Bureau" was enjoined from the use of the word "Metropolitan" in connection with their business.

J. A. Maurer is reported to have pleaded guilty in the Justice's Court of San Diego township on May 13, 1932, to a charge of violation of the Medical Practice Act, and sentenced to pay a fine of \$75. (Previous entry, September 1931.)